

Shading my eyes, I could see the outline of the statue, and pausing, I gazed at it. It was as if a great weight had been lifted from my back. I felt drawn to the statue and, without thinking, I began to approach it. The room was cool and dark inside, and no one seemed to be around me. I reached the base of the statue, and silently, reverently, I looked up into the marble face of Abraham Lincoln. There was a vastness of space, an immensity of emotion, and I felt close to the man who had been dead for almost one hundred years. "Mine eyes have seen the glory . . .," the words rang in my ears. Government of the people, that was glory, wasn't it? "His righteous sentence" was the Gettysburg Address or the Emancipation Proclamation. "He died to make men free." Yes, in his own way Lincoln too had died for that reason. The noise was deafening to my ears; I started to cover them, to run away from their thundering truth and away from the depth of emotion raging through me. I turned and found myself staring into the face of a Negro girl. Again I faced the statue; it had seemed to grow larger; its brilliancy was blinding, and yet I saw what my mind and my heart had known. "His truth is marching on." Yes, his truth still goes on—in the city where his mortal body has been reproduced in marble, and his speeches hewn into granite and placed for all the world to see. Slowly I turned around and walked across the grey floor to the bright sunlight outside.

## Is God So Small?

Mary Louise Spicer

**M**Y CHURCH actually teaches that God is small. Oh yes, we quote scriptures such as, "God created the heavens and the earth," and, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son." I could write on and on about the great things we say about God, but the old cliché, "actions speak louder than words," applies to the church, too. Perhaps a good place to see some of the actions of my church is to listen to a meeting of the Official Board, which is the governing body of the church.

This meeting is in progress, and it is a bit unusual, for there is a "special" guest who has slipped into a back corner of the room. None of the board members are aware of Christ's presence.

The financial chairman is making a report of the proposed budget for the next year. "Our statistics show us that we have a membership of two hundred and eight-five persons. Of these two hundred and eighty-five members, more than one hundred and fifty are employed, and they are making an average salary of \$6,500. Our total budget is \$13,014.20. This is approximately 1.3% of the total income of our members. We hope that we can meet this great challenge."

The Board Director asks for comments.

An elder speaks, "We would like to hear a breakdown of the budget."

The finance chairman proceeds, "Our minister's salary is \$5,254.44."

A deacon quickly asks, "Is this an increase over last year's salary?"

The chairman replies that it is not an increase, and he continues with his report. "The next item is Christian Education. Last year, we spent \$1,200 for this purpose, but due to an increase in the cost of supplies and a slight increase in attendance, we are asking for \$1,400 for this next year."

An elder speaks up, "This seems mighty expensive for a bunch of leaflets and books that will never be read."

After much discussion, a compromise is reached for \$1,300 for Christian Education.

The finance chairman continues, "Third on our list is church maintenance. We estimate a need for \$3,409 for this purpose. We have a few problems in this category. All of you know that our door facings need to be replaced. We have two estimates regarding the cost of this project. Jones' Lumber Company will install them for \$600. Sam's Hardware will sell them for \$560, but he will not install them."

The Director asks for discussion.

The clerk speaks, "I don't think that we should get them at Sam's. He's a member of the church across town, and he gives his church a discount. He won't do the same for us."

Hastily a deaconess replies, "Well, Sam's wife has attended some of our women's meetings, and I like her. I think we should get them at Sam's."

An elder suggests, "It seems to me that we should save \$40 and ask some of our members to install the facings."

The church's secretary jumps up. "No, not that! Every time we attempt such a project, I have to call about fifty persons before I can find one that is willing to do the job."

What's this? Slowly, Christ walks to the front of the room. A mysterious hush falls over the group. Trembling, the Director slides into his chair. Christ shakes his head slowly and says, "You fools! You poor, poor, foolish children! You sit here and squabble over dollars and door facings when you have within you the power and spirit of love, which is of greater force than all of the atomic energy in the world. How often must you be told that the greatest tragedy of the world today is weak-minded, weak-spirited men?"

The thinking of my church and other churches is small because the thinking of the individuals within the church is small. However, though it is weak, I believe that the church does more to exemplify God than any other institution in the world today. Perhaps, someday, the church will surmount this weakness and truly reveal that God is Almighty.